

And that dampens the overall party mood. “I just want to do my work and go home,” Rep. John Campbell (R-Calif.) grouses. “I’m sure I’ll get invited to a lot. I probably won’t attend hardly any.”

Campbell, who plans to celebrate by taking his staff to lunch, says flashy events aren’t worth the effort. “The whole thing of putting on your jacket and gloves — and then checking your jacket and gloves along with a thousand other people who go in and spend 10 minutes — and then you wait 45 minutes to get your stuff back and go out and get in your freezing car,” Campbell says. “It’s a lot of work to go to one of those parties.”

Bucking the humbug trend is the powerhouse lobbying firm Quinn Gillespie. Instead of its usual in-office holiday affair, the firm is celebrating the season and its 10-year anniversary atop the W Hotel. The festivities will be going on at the same time as the White House staff party and the Brunswick Group’s party. “Our hope is, after people have a few drinks at their holiday party, they’ll mosey on down to Georgetown,” Brunswick’s Sutphen says.

“The Quinn Gillespie holiday party is one party where people really have fun while networking with everyone in the media, the Hill and the administration,” says one Democratic staffer. “[Quinn Gillespie co-founder Jack] Quinn is beloved in town, and so everyone who’s anyone is there. Since it’s on the W rooftop, my guess is they’ll get more people trying to get in than ever.”

The company already has received 250 e-mails from people trying to crash. Those who make it in can expect some unusual party favors. “We’re thinking about having human snow globes,” Quinn says. “I am still unclear about how this would be done, but, nonetheless, folks have been offering up some interesting ideas for whom to put in them.”

Not everyone is amused. “Usually, holiday parties are so big — so many people dashing on to the next thing and so forth — there isn’t a lot of purpose to them,” Campbell says.